

U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION

No. 76.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE COMMISSION DURING THE PRES- ENT CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA.

NEW YORK, *Tuesday, May 24, 1864.*

DR. J. FOSTER JENKINS,

General Secretary, U. S. Sanitary Commission :

My Dear Sir,—Pursuant to the request of the Standing Committee, I beg leave to present the following informal report, (necessarily imperfect, from the haste with which it has been prepared,) of the organization and operations of the relief system of the Commission in Northeastern Virginia since the opening of the present campaign :

I left New York on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 10, for the purpose of making a personal examination of the working of the Commission for the aid and relief of the wounded by the battles of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania. At Washington, I learned that the wounded had collected in immense numbers at Fredericksburgh, and were already being transported to Belle Plain, on their way, by hospital transports, to Washington and Alexandria. Up to Monday, the 9th, it was expected that the wounded would be sent to the rear, *via* Rappahannock Station, and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and to this end great

preparations had been made by the Quartermaster's Department, under advice from the Medical Bureau. Immense trains of cars, with a full corps of Surgeons, were sent out to the Rappahannock Station on Sunday, 8th inst.

There they waited until the next day, when, it having been ascertained that the wounded were already in very large numbers at Fredericksburgh, the trains were ordered back to Alexandria.

I make this introductory statement with some precision, since it furnishes a key to the difficulties which attended the care of the wounded at Fredericksburgh, during the period from May 8 to Thursday, May 12.

Fredericksburgh is about ten miles from Belle Plain, and as the railroad from Acquia Creek had been thoroughly destroyed, the most direct and available access to the thousands of wounded already gathered at the former place, was *via* Potomac Creek and Belle Plain Landing. The rebels had destroyed the wharves at Belle Plain, but during the 8th and 9th of May, most vigorous efforts were made by the Quartermaster's Department to prepare a temporary landing. To this landing, on Monday and Tuesday, (9th and 10th of May,) came a fleet of transports conveying ordnance stores, fighting rations, hospital appliances, and means of shelter for the incoming wounded. The dock, a most creditable structure, considering the time within which it was built, but perhaps hardly large enough for the demands made upon its capacity, presented a fearful scene when I arrived at Belle Plain on Wednesday afternoon.

I found one of our supply barges, the *Kennedy*, at the dock, and Dr. STEINER directing the operations of the Commission. Down the right-hand side of the U-shaped dock, slowly moved a single file of army wagons filled with wounded men; at the end or corner of the dock, by the gangway of a large Government transport, stood that most efficient and admirable officer, Dr. CUYLER, Acting Medical Inspector-General, U. S. A.,

receiving the wounded and superintending their removal from the wagons to the deck of the transport, preparatory to their transfer to the hospital steamboats that lay in the offing. After each wagon had deposited its living freight, it passed around the end of the dock to the left-hand side, and there took in ammunition or fighting rations, the orders being imperative to return to the Front only with full loads of these indispensable supplies. Crowding along the narrow margin of the dock, were continuous lines of men carrying litters and stretchers on which were such of the more severely wounded as had been removed from the wagons at the hospital tents, on the hillside above the plain. Hour after hour, for several days, was this fearful procession kept up. It would not be proper for me to state how many thousands thus passed under Dr. CUYLER's inspection, but I cannot forbear mentioning the most distinguished zeal, energy and self-devotion with which his arduous duties were performed. His administrative skill, his quick and ready humanity, his almost ubiquitous presence, his self-denying exposure to the pelting rain, while laboring to secure prompt shelter to the wounded, his night work and day work, his personal attentions to the pressing wants and minor discomforts of each individual sufferer, were the subjects of universal admiration. Dr. BRINTON, (Medical Purveyor of the Army of the Potomac,) was also there, working with efficiency in the difficult undertaking of forwarding medical supplies promptly to Fredericksburgh and to the Front.

By the end of the pier lay the barge *Kennedy*, the storeboat and headquarters of the Commission. Here, as elsewhere, everything was astir. Gen. ABERCROMBIE, Commandant of the post, was making it his temporary headquarters. Out in the stream, amid a promiscuous collection of transports, lay the steamboat *Rapley*, loaded with stores from the Washington storehouses of the Commission. Near her, lay the barge *Washington*, with a load of army wagons and horses for the Commission's service.

After great difficulty, and the exercise of no little ingenuity, the stores from the *Rapley* were put ashore, half a mile up the creek in small boats, and the wagons loaded and sent to Fredericksburgh. Capt. J. W. CLARKE, of the Quartermaster's Department, and Capt. LUBEY, Fifteenth Regiment New York Engineer Corps, gave us most cheerful and essential aid in this work. Indeed, from all the officers at the post the Commission received nothing but kind services and expressions of the heartiest good-will. Capts. PITKINS and LACEY, of the Quartermaster's Department, provided every facility in their power, and from Gen. ABERCROMBIE and Col. CUYLER down, everybody seemed to take pleasure in aiding us. From Monday the 9th, until this time, incessant exertions have been made by the officers of the Medical, Quartermaster's, Commissary's and Ordnance Departments, to remove the wounded from the rear of the army, and replenish the trains for forward movements. No one at home can form any idea of the labors of the officers in these departments, day after day, and night after night, oftentimes living, meanwhile, on the scantiest subsistence, such as coffee and crackers, and these hurriedly taken. We are oftentimes loud in our praises of military commanders, for achieving victory, but seldom give due credit for the result to the Quartermasters, who work with almost superhuman energy at some base of supplies, and on whose talent, energy, and fertility in resources, the very existence of the army depends. The agents of the U. S. Sanitary Commission formed no mean feature in the scene of energy and successful labor. Up to May 21, the Commission sent, by its own wagons, nearly 200 tons of sanitary stores, including stimulants, farinaceous food, beef stock, condensed milk, bandages, &c., from Belle Plain to Fredericksburgh. It will be interesting to note the fact here, that the relief service of the Commission has involved, since Gen. GRANT crossed the Rapidan, and Gen. BUTLER went up the James River, the use of four steamboats, three barges, and two schooners, for the transporta-

tion of its stores from Washington to Belle Plain, and from Baltimore to Norfolk, the latter being the Commission's base of supplies for BUTLER's army.

At Belle Plain, in addition to a relief station on the barge by the wharf, the Commission has had a corps of relief agents at a feeding station near the hospital depôt, providing food for thousands of weary and hungry men who arrive there in ambulances and wagons, and another at White Oak Church, half way from Belle Plain to Fredericksburgh, where hot coffee, soft crackers, and beef soup, have been issued to wounded and disabled men on their way to hospital, many of whom have not tasted food or received attention for forty-eight hours. Did space permit, I would make mention of every person engaged in this most exhaustive and beneficent labor.

The operations of the Commission at Belle Plain, including the movements of trains of supply wagons, have been conducted by Mr. F. N. KNAPP, whose experience in every branch of relief service has made his name the synonym for energy and beneficence wherever the Commission is known.

At Fredericksburgh, the Commission's work, under the able direction of Dr. DOUGLAS, Chief Inspector, is three-fold. First, there is a large storehouse on Commercial street, under the care of Mr. JOHNSON, from which, since the 9th of May, about 200 tons of Sanitary stores have been issued to hospitals upon the requisitions of surgeons. Secondly, a corps of relief agents, numbering from 160 to 225, under the leadership of Mr. FAY, divided into squads, and assigned to the various division hospitals. These relief agents report the wants of the hospitals to Mr. FAY, perform the duties of nurses, and seize every opportunity to minister to the complicated and various wants of the wounded, as indicated by the advice or orders of the surgeons in charge. Thirdly, special diet kitchens, under the administration of Miss WOOLSEY, Mrs. Gen. BARLOW, and Miss GILSON, while Mrs. GIBBONS and daughter, and Mrs. HUSBAND, lend their ex-

pert services to the hospitals. The special diet kitchens are tents, with ample cooking arrangements, pitched on the roads from the front to Fredericksburgh or Belle Plain. From these, soup, coffee, stimulants, soft bread, and other food, are issued to thousands of passing wounded. With the army, seven four-horse wagons carrying food, stimulants, under-clothing, and surgical dressings constantly move under the direction of Dr. STEINER, the Commission Inspector for the Army of the Potomac, and Mr. JOHNSON, whose services at Gettysburgh, and now at Fredericksburgh, form a bright page in the special relief work of the Commission. I should say here that these wagons moved with the army from Brandy Station, dispensing stores during the battles of the Wilderness, and then, passing with the wounded to Fredericksburgh, went on to Belle Plain to reload.

The Commission has now forty odd four-horse wagons of its own, carrying sanitary stores from Belle Plain to Fredericksburgh. On Monday, May 23d, thirty-one of these wagons, carrying nearly forty thousand pounds of sanitary stores, went in one train from Belle Plain to Fredericksburgh. On the same day, our steamboat the *Rapley*, in charge of Mr. ANDERSON, with the barge *Kennedy* in tow, cleared from Belle Plain and went up the Rappahannock to Fredericksburgh, to add still more largely to our supplies. Our work, then, for the sick and wounded of the army of General MEADE may be summed up briefly as follows: Two steamboats and two barges for conveying sanitary stores from Washington to Belle Plain; forty-four four-horse wagons for conveying sanitary stores from Belle Plain to Fredericksburgh and the Front—over two hundred tons of sanitary stores sent to Belle Plain and Fredericksburgh; more than 200 expert relief agents working at Belle Plain, White Oak Church, and Fredericksburgh; and more than 25,000 weary or wounded men fed in hospital or by the way. The outlay for the month of May, so far, has been over two

hundred thousand dollars for the Army of the Potomac alone. You will remember that all these operations are in addition to what is being done, by the Commission at Washington, for General SHERMAN's army, at New Orleans, on the Red River, and elsewhere.

I should say that at Fredericksburgh, the medical affairs were under the able management of Dr. DALTON, Medical Director, while large numbers of medical men from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, served day and night in the hospitals, aiding those devoted men, the army surgeons, in their exhaustive and most serious and self denying duties. Who can sum up the value of the services of the army surgeons? Who can describe, in becoming phrases, a tithe of what they do for the thousands of suffering men thrown upon their care and skill by the fearful casualties of an active campaign? I never witness their conduct without a sense of the profoundest admiration, and a renewed conviction that the best work of our Commission is that by which we endeavor, even in a humble way, to strengthen their hands by supplementary assistance.

Sincerely, yours,

C. R. AGNEW.

APPENDIX A.

U. S. Sanitary Commission,

Central Office, 244 F Street,

Washington, D. C., June 5th, 1864.

DR J. FOSTER JENKINS,

General Secretary U. S. Sanitary Commission:

Sir,—The following statement shows the issues made by the U. S. Sanitary Commission to the armies of Virginia, in the field, during the month of May, 1864.

Air Cushions.....	130	Ring Cushions.....	654
Air Beds.....	10	Sheets.....	1,416
Bed Ticks.....	3,541	Spittoons.....	265
Bed Pans.....	265	Spit cups.....	494
Blankets.....	2,932	Towels.....	7,798
Chambers.....	271	Tin cups.....	7,406
Candlesticks.....	312	Tin wash-basins.....	1,235
Combs, coarse.....	2,508	Tin plates.....	1,893
Combs, fine.....	1,720	Urinals.....	262
Cushions.....	5,817	Mattresses.....	144
Head-rests.....	110	Knives and forks.....	1,114
Lanterns.....	376	Spoons.....	2,905
Medicine cups.....	315	Stretchers.....	45
Medicine tubes.....	288	Dippers.....	100
Netting, mosquito, pcs.....	268	Cotton Drawers, pairs.....	3,427
Oil Silk, rolls.....	162	Woolen " ".....	12,304
Pillows.....	3,394	Handkerchiefs.....	14,991
Pillow cases.....	1,424	Forage (oats), bushels.....	2,950
Pillow ticks.....	3,300	Hay, lbs.....	15,000
Quilts.....	1,203	Salt beef, bbls.....	6

Dessicated veg., cases.....	6	Lemon Syrup, bot.....	600
Hams, lbs.....	1,857	Maizena, lbs.....	1,854
Shaving Brushes.....	12	Mustard, lbs.....	350
Razors.....	12	Nutmegs, lbs.....	20
Lard, lbs.....	127	Oat meal, lbs.....	2,344
Pants, cotton, prs.....	67	Pickles, gals.....	942
Shirts, cotton.....	6,403	Porter, bbls.....	70
Wool Shirts.....	19,507	Potatoes, bbls.....	60
Shoes.....	472	Rice, lbs.....	400
Slippers.....	2,909	New England Rum, bot....	12
Socks, cotton.....	3,208	Jamaica " ".....	1,068
" wool.....	9,451	Sugar, lbs.....	11,868
Wrappers.....	648	Spices, lbs.....	119
Pails.....	695	Tamarinds, gals.....	511½
Canes.....	67	Tea, black, lbs.....	1,488
Pocket flasks.....	6	Tea, green, lbs.....	1,200
Cots.....	30	Tobacco, lbs.....	3,306
Ales (see Porter), bbls.....	39	Vinegar, gals.....	258
Ale, bots.....	144	Vinegar, Raspberry, bots...	24
Dried Apples, bbls.....	181	Wine, foreign, bots.....	3,960
Arrow Root, lbs.....	100	Coffee Pots.....	119
Beef stock, lbs.....	8,165	Flour, bbls.....	2
Brandy, bots.....	2,514	Wrapping paper, reams....	13
Canned Meat, lbs.....	4,532	Molasses, gals.....	182
Canned Fruit, lbs.....	2,254	Kerosene Oil, gals.....	17½
Canned Vegetables, lbs....	4,252	Chisel.....	1
Cherry Rum, bots.....	312	Screwdriver.....	1
Cocoa, lbs.....	326	Gimblets.....	12
Chocolate, sweet, lbs.....	8,584	Domestic Wine, bot.....	975
Coffee Ext. (see Coffee), lbs.	1,266	Whiskey, bot.....	3,520
Dried Beef, lbs.....	949	" gals.....	23
Hammers.....	22	Alcohol, bot.....	280
Axes.....	40	Bandages, bbls.....	38
Handsaws.....	18	Bay Rum, bots.....	699
Hatchets.....	44	Body Bands.....	1,047
Nails, lbs.....	405	Books, boxes.....	5
Shovels.....	38	Cologne, bots.....	620
Spades.....	9	Crutches.....	2,843
Coffee, ground, lbs.....	3,106	Fans.....	7,750
Condensed Milk, lbs.....	18,912	Games.....	51
Crackers, bbls.....	353	Lint, bbls.....	21
Corn Starch, lbs.....	3,582	Old Linen, bbls.....	129
Corn Meal, bbls.....	13	Slings.....	2,266
Dried Peaches, bbls.....	2	Soap, lbs.....	953
Ext. Ginger, bots.....	2,628	Sponges, lbs.....	309½
Farina, lbs.....	6,480	Candles, lbs.....	1,945
Gelatine, pcks.....	24	Butter, lbs.....	3,858
Gin, bots.....	48	Cheese, lbs.....	1,045
Jellies and Preserves, bot...	62	Eggs, doz.....	2,619
Lemons, boxes.....	408	Bread, loaves.....	5,387

Pins, papers.....	735	Chloride of Lime, lbs.....	1,870
Envelopes.....	21,325	Ligature Silk, lbs.....	3½
Ink, bots.....	320	Haversacks.....	150
Paper, writing, rm (1,392 qr)	58	Blouses.....	84
Pencils.....	5,328	Hospital Car Loops.....	100
Penholders.....	1,288	Water Coolers.....	8
Pens.....	1,288	Bromine, lbs.....	2
Oakum, lbs.....	1,300	Patent Lint, lbs.....	50
Pipes.....	4,000	Dressing Forceps.....	24
Chloroform, lbs.....	540	Tacks, papers.....	16
Spirits Camphor, bots.....	45	Wire, yds.....	100
Cook Stoves and fixtures.....	12	Door Mats.....	6
Wall Tents, &c.....	17	Needles, gross.....	1
Sand Paper, quire.....	1	Mutton Tallow, lbs.....	55
Can Openers.....	9	Sheeting, piece.....	1
Twine, lbs.....	49½	Refrigerator.....	1
Corkscrews.....	40	Stove Boilers.....	2
Scissors, prs.....	242	Chlorinium, boxes.....	20
Pepper Boxes.....	8	Clothing, boxes.....	6
Saleratus, lbs.....	10	Rocking Chairs.....	6
Pepper, lbs.....	70	Cider, bots.....	57
Tin Pans, for washing dishes.	22	Faucets.....	12
Salt, lbs.....	1,483	“ Augurs.....	2
Oranges, boxes.....	54	Pump.....	1
Camp Kettles.....	100	Canteens.....	224
Frying Pans.....	17	Blacking, boxes.....	72
Adhesive Plaster, rolls.....	44	Sardines, “.....	362
Nutmeg Graters.....	4	Paper Bags.....	300
Camp Stools.....	30	Washing Machines.....	3
Baskets.....	12	Blank Books.....	12
Lumber, ft.....	6,000	Ice, tons.....	97½
Straw, lbs.....	16,000	Copperas, bots.....	12
China Plates.....	24	Chloride Soda, bots.....	3
Oil Cloth, yds.....	20	Medicine Chests.....	2
Cathartic Pills.....	200	Stove Brushes.....	6
Opium “.....	6,000	Salt Pork, bbl.....	1
“ and Camp. Pills.....	2,000	Stew Pans.....	12
Smoked tongues.....	60	Broilers.....	12
Rubber Blankets.....	221	Frying Pans.....	12
Open Links.....	252	Fresh Beef, lbs.....	2,200
Feed Troughs.....	14	“ Four-horse Wagons, with	
Splints, boxes.....	9	harness, whips, extra whif-	
Matches, gross.....	36	fletree, &c., complete.....	36
Rubber Cloth, yds.....	682	“ Two-horse Wagons,” do.	2
Morphine, oz.....	17	Horses.....	156
White Flannel, yds.....	20		

The following named stores were sent from New York, and stored in Baltimore. About one-third of these were loaded on board the *Ridley*, and taken to Norfolk, in tow of the *Kent*.

4,291 galls. Pickled Tomatoes.
 51,812 lbs. Canned Tomatoes.
 1,106 galls. Curried Cabbage.
 671 bbls. Dried Apples.
 15,168 galls. Sour Kraut.
 4,162 " Pickles.
 3,580 " Pickled Onions.
 12,060 lbs. Apple Pulp.
 2,400 boxes Portable Lemonade.
 1 tub Apple Butter.
 1 doz. Ginger Wine.

Very respectfully,

Your ob't servant,

WM. A. HOVEY,

Assistant to Associate Secretary,
 Eastern Department.

APPENDIX B.

*Statement of Disbursements, during the month of May, 1864,
for the national forces in Virginia.*

SUPPLIES—Amount paid for purchases—

At New York.....	\$57,942 38
At Washington.....	28,758 58
At Baltimore.....	43,404 64

\$130,105 60

DISTRIBUTION—Expenses of, including subsistence, transportation, and compensation of over two hundred relief agents, forage for horses, materials necessary for the work of agents.....

17,150 17

HORSES, WAGONS, AND HARNESS—Amount paid for...

31,755 43

TRANSPORTATION—Amount paid for charter—

Steamer "Kent," 20 days, to June 1st.....	\$4,500 00
Steamer "J. B. Thompson," 27 days, to June 1st...	3,375 00
Steamer "Mary Rapley," 24 days, to June 1st...	2,400 00
Steamer "Phoenix," $7\frac{3}{4}$ days, to June 1st... ..	690 00
Steamer "Gov. Curtin," 8 days, to June 1st.....	800 00
Schooner "Ridley," 15 days, to June 1st.....	300 00
Barge "Washington," do.	420 00
" "Hoboken," 10 days, to June 1st.....	275 00
Coal, labor, &c.....	2,373 21

15,133 21

SPECIAL RELIEF—Amount during the month.....

4,206 80

Estimated value of additional supplies contributed to the
Commission and issued to the army in Southern Virginia.

130,000 00

\$328,351 21